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A LETTER
TO MRS. HANNAH MORE:
WITH
A DISCOURSE
SUBJOINED.

Printed by JAMES BATESON, Denmark Street, Soho.

A LETTER

MRS. HANNAH MORE

A LETTER

TO MRS. HANNAH MORE
ASSISTANT OF FEMALE EDUCATION



JOINED

A.D. 1851

subjoined.

REACHED AT CHRIST'S CHURCH IN BATH

Given by JAMES BATESON, Donor, 1851.
BY THE REV. CHARLES DUBREUIL, M.A.
MINISTER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, BATH.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. HATCHARD, LONDON, 1851.
GREEN, 1851.
BY HIS MOTHER, 1851.

M. 100. K. 10.

A LETTER
TO
MRS. HANNAH MORE,
ON SOME PART OF
HER LATE PUBLICATION,
ENTITLED
"STRICTURES ON FEMALE EDUCATION."

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED

A DISCOURSE
ON GENESIS XV. 6.

PREACHED AT CHRIST'S CHURCH IN BATH.

BY THE REV. CHARLES DAUBENY, L.L.B.
MINISTER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, BATH.

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M DCC XCIX.

A LETTER

TO

MRS. HANNAH MORE

ON SOME PART OF

HER LATE PUBLICATION

EDITED

STRUCTURES ON FEMALE EDUCATION



A D D R E S S

ON GENEALOGY, &c.

PREACHED AT CHRIST'S CHURCH IN BATH

BY THE REV. CHAS. DAVENANT, D.D.

MINISTER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, BATH

IN THE YEAR 1784

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

IN THE STRAND, NEAR THE ROYAL EXCHANGE

M DCC LXXXIV

A LETTER,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

MADAM,

THE respect which is justly due to your character, for your repeated, and it is to be hoped, in some degree at least, successful exertions, in the cause of religion and morality, will not, I trust, be deemed incompatible with the observations, I have ventured to make upon some part of your late excellent publication.

The language of flattery, Madam, is not the language, in which I profess to deal. It is neither consistent with my character, as a Minister; nor is it suited to my way of thinking, as a man. When I say, therefore, that it must have been my own fault, had I not, from the perusal

of your writings from time to time, derived both pleasure and edification, I hope to be understood, as speaking a plain truth. A truth not less plain, and which I trust may be spoken without giving offence, even to your warmest admirers; for I will not pay you, Madam, so bad a compliment, as to suppose that you can be offended by it; is this; that, had I been honoured with your confidence, I certainly should have employed it, in remonstrating against the manner, in which one particular part of your subject is placed before the reader.

Thinking as you do, and perhaps, with too much reason, that the Clergy of the Established Church are negligent in the discharge of their important trust; you will be ready to give credit to any individual among them, acting in his character, as a guardian of the truth. In that character, believe me, Madam, I appear the more readily on this occasion; because, whilst the many excellent things, which
are

are to be met with in your late publication, cannot cease to be so on account of their being accompanied, with what strikes me to be an error; an attempt to guard against the effect, which that error seems calculated to produce, may tend to increase, rather than diminish the real usefulness of a work, upon which the public has pronounced so favourable a judgment.

Convinced as I am, from the tenor of your writing, that we are in perfect unison, on the general subject of Christianity; it was not without sensible disappointment, that I met with a page which conveyed to me a discordant sound.

When, some years since, you addressed yourself to the Great, on the important influence their manners must have on the public mind; no one could mark with greater precision than you did, that line of distinction between belief and practice; actions and motives; moral virtue and religious obedience; necessary to direct the conduct of the Christian professor. The

impression left on the reader's mind, for the evident purpose of counteracting that common but fatal error, which mistakes a decent profession of the doctrines of Christianity, for the diligent discharge of the duties of it, was truly scriptural. Whilst the allusions, taken from the "Tree which bore no fruit," "the lamp which had no oil," the unprofitable servant, who made "no use of his talent," left that strong mark behind them, which is the peculiar characteristic of Scripture language, when properly applied. In perfect conformity with the foregoing representation of the subject, is the language contained in a great part of your late publication; so admirably calculated to counteract that Antinomian tendency, prevalent in high, not less than in low life; which the grand deceiver of mankind has been at all times industriously grafting upon the genuine doctrine of the Cross. This indolent Christianity, which consists in an unwarranted assurance of salvation founded on a slight, vague,

vague, and general confidence in what Christ has done and suffered for us, unconnected with a faithful discharge of those duties, which constitute one material part of the Gospel covenant; you justly observe, is no where taught in the Bible. "The faith inculcated there, (you say truly,) is not a lazy, professional faith; but that faith, which produceth obedience; that faith, which worketh by love; that faith, of which the practical language is, "*strive* that you may enter in;" "*so run* that ye may obtain;" "*so fight* that you may lay hold on eternal life."---That faith, which directs us not to be weary in well-doing; which says, "work out your own salvation;" on the encouraging consideration, "that it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do."---Remembering, at the same time, that though God has been pleased to vouchsafe to man *a title of grace* to salvation, derived from his own performances, by declaring that those "who do his com-

“mandments, have a right to the tree of life,”—Rev. xxii. 14. yet man is, at the same time, to beware of considering his performances, how perfect soever they may be, as the *meritorious* cause of his salvation.

You proceed to observe, Madam, with equal conformity to the plan of salvation under the new covenant, that one great object of the Christian dispensation was to bring the fallen creature man into a state of fitness for it; by working in him that change of nature and disposition; necessary to qualify him for the inheritance, which has been purchased for him; a change which has been described in Scripture under the various names “of the new man,” “the new creature,” “a transformation into the image of God,” “a participation of the divine nature.”

Had you suffered your subject to have remained on this ground, your reasoning upon it must have been unshaken; because it would have been built upon the firm basis

basis of Scripture: and as such, calculated to produce that symmetry and proportion among all the parts of the Christian character, in which its beauty and perfection consists. According to this representation of the subject, man appears, as he really is, a reasonable and accountable being: a Being placed in a world of trial, and blessed with advantages, by the use or neglect of which his future condition will be determined: a Being, exhibiting in his conduct a striking analogy between the kingdom of nature, and the kingdom of grace. In consequence of the fall, the subject of cultivation in both was left in a disordered state. Thorns and briars, in a figurative as well as literal sense, became the natural produce of the soil. The influence of heaven was not, however, withdrawn. The sun continued to shine upon, and the clouds to water the earth; whilst the spirit of God still visited the soul of man. But the production of fruit, spiritual not less than natural, was

left to depend on the concurrence of human means, with the powerful operation of divine grace.---Thus far, Madam, it is presumed, we are perfectly agreed: And so long as we keep the Bible before us, I flatter myself we cannot disagree.

But, after having proceeded a few pages further in your publication, I feel myself constrained to object to the manner, in which your subject is stated; because it appears to me, to be not only unwarranted by Scripture, but founded in an error, calculated to do injury to the cause you wish to promote.

You observe, and with too much truth,
 “ that there are two sorts of Christian professors; one of which affect to speak of
 “ Christianity, as if it were a mere system
 “ of doctrines, with little reference to their
 “ influence on life and manners; while the
 “ other, if they may be honoured with that
 “ name, consider it as exhibiting a scheme
 “ of human duties independant on its doctrines.”---To settle the difference of
 opinion

opinion between these two sorts of Christian professors, who treat faith and works, as if they were opposite interests, instead of, what they ought to be, inseparable points; and thereby bring them to the acknowledgment of that harmonious connexion, which the Scripture was designed to establish between belief and practice; you appeal to the authority of St. Paul, whose manner of writing appears to you expressly designed to produce this effect. “ For
 “ it is observable (you say) that the earlier
 “ parts of most of his Epistles abound in
 “ the doctrines of Christianity; while those
 “ latter chapters which wind up the subject,
 “ exhibit all the duties which grow
 “ out of them, as the *natural* and *necessary*
 “ productions of such a living root.”——

In pursuance of this idea, you proceed to observe that, “ those who would make Christianity consist of doctrines only, dwell,
 “ for instance, on the first eleven chapters
 “ of the Epistle to the Romans, as containing *exclusively* the sum and substance
 “ of

“ of the Gospel. While the mere mora-
 “ lists, who wish to strip Christianity of
 “ her lofty and appropriate attributes, de-
 “ light to dwell on the twelfth chapter,
 “ which is a table of duties as *exclusively*,
 “ as if the preceding chapters made no part
 “ of Scripture.”---Vide Vol. ii. p. 292,
 293.

The object you have in view, Madam,
 namely, that of preventing the “substitution
 “ of Pagan morality for Christian holiness;
 “ and of securing the leading doctrine of
 “ justification by faith, from the dreadful
 “ dangers of Antinomian licentiousness,”
 is what every Christian minister ought ear-
 nestly to join with you in promoting; and
 did I think that your manner of represent-
 ing the Apostolic plan of instruction really
 conducive to the desired purpose, any in-
 quiry into the truth of it might appear,
 though not an useless, to be at least an in-
 vidious undertaking. But professing to
 have the same cause at heart with yourself,
 a difference of opinion respecting the means
 by

by which it is to be promoted, will not I trust, subject me to any imputation, which an honest Minister would be unwilling to acknowledge. In this confidence, Madam, I shall submit to your candid consideration, the ideas that have presented themselves to my mind on the subject alluded to.

In the first place then, the distinction which you have placed before your reader, between the eleven first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans and the twelfth, does not appear to me to have any real existence. The first eleven chapters do not contain *exclusively* the sum and substance of the Gospel; by which, it is presumed, is meant, the *doctrinal* part exclusive of the *practical*: Nor does the twelfth deliver a table of duties, which the mere moralist can perform, independent of an acquaintance with Christian doctrine. The sixth chapter, one of the eleven supposed to contain *exclusively* the doctrinal part of the Gospel, speaks so decidedly in favour of

Chris-

Christian practice, as a necessary appendage to Christian profession, that it must at least claim an exemption from that particular plan, by which you describe the Apostolic instruction as being generally distinguished : and leads consequently to the conclusion, that in this case at least, no such plan constituted the principle, by which the mind of the Apostle was directed, in the management of the subject before him. Indeed, was I called upon to point out that part of St. Paul's Epistles, which contained the most powerful argument in favour of Christian practice, I know not whether this sixth chapter would not be the part selected for the purpose. And, I am persuaded, had you, Madam, seen this chapter in the light in which it strikes me, and in which I believe it has been generally seen ; it would have furnished you with a conclusion more unanswerable, than the one you have attempted to draw from that imaginary distinction, which has influenced your reasoning on this occasion.

In

In the chapter, preceding the one here pointed out to consideration, the Apostle fully established the doctrine of justification by faith, attainable by all mankind "by righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ."---Rom. v. 21. Having then laid the foundation of man's salvation sure in Christ, he proceeds in the chapter immediately before us, to raise that superstructure upon it, necessary to the perfection of the Christian building; by pointing out the consequences that followed from the doctrine laid down; with express view to the practice designed to accompany it; that his disciples might "not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Jesus Christ."---2 Pet. i. 8.

The substance of the Apostle's reasoning in the sixth and following chapters, appears to be this; that the doctrine of salvation through Christ gave no encouragement to sin; but on the contrary, required obedience to the commands of God. That the law of works exacting perfect
obedi-

obedience as a title to reward, and pronouncing sentence upon the non-performance of that obedience, was abrogated; because the parties living under it were not in a condition to act up to the tenor of it. They were, therefore, in the Apostle's words "loosed from the law, that they might serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;"--- Rom. vii. 6.; in other words; that, under the gracious dispensation of the Gospel, they might be enabled by the holy spirit, to bring forth fruit acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.—And whoever, living under that dispensation, does not bring forth such fruit, is not a true Christian; and consequently has no title to eternal happiness.

Nothing can be more conclusive than the Apostle's mode of reasoning upon this occasion. By bringing profession and practice together, considered as the seal and signature of Christianity, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of the impression made;

made ; the Apostle has rendered it impossible for even the most inattentive reader, to go away with the idea that Christianity is a mere system of doctrines, unconnected with its proper influence on life and manners. For the very contrary idea, is decidedly the very idea which the 6th chapter is calculated to leave upon the reader's mind. "What shall we say then," observes the Apostle by way of conclusion to the doctrine of grace, which had just been laid down by him ; shall we draw this inference from it, that we may continue in sin, that the grace of God may still more abound towards us ? God forbid, that an inference so inconsistent with our Christian profession should be drawn. For as the Apostle proceeds, how shall we, who at baptism profess to be dead unto sin, by entering into a specific engagement to renounce all former evil courses, how can we, consistently with that engagement, "live any longer therein ?"--- "For know ye not, that so many of us as are baptized

“tized into the Church of Christ, are baptized into the likeness of his Death?” that is, by baptism, we profess to die, like Christ, unto sin. For this reason, the service of baptism furnishes an emblematic representation of our death and burial with Christ; to signify that, like as Christ, being dead and buried, was raised up from the dead unto the glory of the Father, even so we also, being raised from our typical death and burial, in baptism, should walk in newness of life. And it is upon condition that we do walk so, that any benefit is to be expected from our connexion with Christ. “For, as the Apostle proceeds, it is upon condition, that we become one with Christ, in the likeness of his death unto sin, that we shall become one with him in the likeness of his resurrection to glory.”

Here then we have, Madam, what may properly be called an argument *ad homines*. An appeal made by the Apostle to the understanding of his hearers, for the express

press purpose of inducing those to whom it was addressed, to measure their own practice, by the standard of their Christian profession. As if he had said,—by baptism you have taken upon you the Christian profession ;—consider well the work which you thereby are engaged, by the assistance of divine grace, to perform ; viz. to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness. And remember that the advantage to be expected from the Christian profession, will depend upon the discharge of the obligation annexed to it.—From premises thus regularly drawn, the Apostle proceeds to his conclusion.

In the twelfth verse of this chapter, we find the important logical *therefore*, which finally winds up the argument. “ Let
 “ not sin *therefore* reign in your mortal bo-
 “ dies, that you should obey it in the lusts
 “ thereof : neither yield your members as
 “ instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ;
 “ but yield yourselves unto God as those
 “ that are alive from the dead, and your
 c “ mem_

“ members as instruments of righteousness
 “ unto God. For the wages of sin is
 “ death ; but the gift of God, is eternal
 “ life, through Jesus Christ, to all, who,
 “ being made free from sin, and become
 “ the servants of God, have their fruit
 “ unto holiness, and their end everlasting
 “ life.”---Rom. vi. 22, 23.

Admitting the foregoing paraphrase to
 be a just one, had the Apostle thought
 proper to have concluded his Epistle with
 this sixth chapter, nothing I conceive would
 have been wanting to convince the parties,
 to whom it was addressed, of the indispen-
 sable necessity of Christian practice to the
 completion of the Christian character ; and
 consequently the true professor, who at-
 tended to the force of the argument drawn
 out in it, could not possibly form that par-
 tial view of the Christian system, which
 the first eleven chapters of the Epistle in
 question are, according to your statement,
 calculated to produce.

We

We will now, Madam, if you please, turn our thoughts to the second part of your position, which appears to me to stand on no better foundation.

You say that “ the mere moralists, who
 “ wish to strip Christianity of her lofty
 “ and appropriate attributes, delight to
 “ dwell on the twelfth chapter, which is
 “ a table of duties as *exclusively*, as if the
 “ preceding chapters made no part of
 “ Scripture.”

The twelfth chapter shall be allowed to be a table of duties; but what are the duties enforced in it? You, Madam, possess too discriminating a judgment, not to draw the line between the duties of the mere moralist and the Christian: I am therefore convinced, that, upon a due consideration of the contents of the chapter in question; you would have concluded, that it contained duties which no mere moralist could perform. In fact, Madam, the duties contained in it, if I understand them rightly, relate to man solely in his

connexion with Christ under the second covenant ; to which the mere moralist in his state of nature must be a perfect stranger.

It was the observation of the learned Grotius, " that the Apostle, having in the
 " foregoing part of his Epistle proved, that
 " justification was not to be obtained by
 " the Law, but by faith through Jesus
 " Christ, designed in this chapter to shew,
 " how the law was perfected and spiri-
 " tualized by the Gospel."---This chapter therefore, cannot, according to this idea, be understood, much less can the duties of it be practised, but by a person acquainted with the genius and spirit of the Christian religion. To consider it then, as containing duties which the mere moralist might perform, is to degrade the subject, which the Apostle appears to have had before him, and thereby to lessen the effect which the spiritual connexion between the Law and Gospel, when properly enforced, was calculated to produce.

But

But perhaps, it may not be thought fair to bring forward the authority of a learned commentator on such an occasion. Nor is there the least occasion for it; since the plain letter of the chapter in question may be left to speak for itself. The second verse of it runs, "Be not conformed to
 " to this world; but be ye transformed by
 " the renewing of your mind, that ye may
 " prove what is that good, and acceptable,
 " and perfect will of God."--Rom. xii. 2. Here, Madam, if I mistake not, we have one of the "lofty and appropriate attributes of Christianity" contained in that most essential doctrine of the Gospel, which respects the spiritual renovation of man's fallen nature; which, under the heads contained in the nineteenth chapter, you properly class among the leading doctrines of Christianity, described in Scripture, as you observe in page 279, under the various names of "the new man," "the
 " new creature," "a *transformation* into
 " the image of God;" the very lan-
 c 3 guage

guage made use of in the verse now under consideration. In this verse, then the Apostle was pointing out to the attention of his disciples that important change of disposition and habit, which was to distinguish the Christian character: a change which consisted in their being renewed in the spirit of their minds; in being conformed to the image of God; a change, which in its beginning, progress, and accomplishment, is every where represented in Scripture, as the work of the Holy Spirit. But this subject to the mere moralist must be perfectly unintelligible; for the mere moralist cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, being unpossessed of that spiritual discernment, which alone qualifies for the purpose. Such a doctrine, therefore, the Apostle would not have proposed to *him*, because he would have been aware, that it must have been "foolishness to him, " and that he could not know it."

The next subject particularly recommended by the Apostle to his disciples,
re-

respected the Christian Church, and the relative duties of those who had offices to discharge in it. The language in which this subject is clothed, is the same that was made use of by the Apostle on another occasion to his disciples at Corinth; and for the same purpose, of preserving the Unity of the Church. "For as we have
 " many members in one body, and all the
 " members have not the same office; so
 " we, being many, are one body in Christ;
 " and every one, members one of another."

2 Cor. xii. 12.---This subject could be addressed only to members of the Christian Church: and in placing before them their spiritual connection in Christ, as members of his Church, it tended to bring to their recollection the conclusion drawn by the Apostle from that circumstance, in a foregoing part of this Epistle, relative to Christian practice; as the necessary accompaniment to Christian profession. Now, as the mere moralist knows nothing, at least as he ought, either of Christ or his Church, this

subject, not less than the one already mentioned, must consequently be a subject, with which he has nothing to do. Other parts of this chapter require no comment : To the Christian they speak a plain language. “ Be fervent in spirit, serving the
 “ Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in
 “ tribulation; continue instant in prayer,
 “ distributing to the necessity of the Saints.”

But in what sense could the foregoing directions constitute any part of a table of duties, addressed to the *mere moralist*?

The chapter concludes with a duty peculiar to Christianity; a duty which constituted part of the sublime doctrine delivered by our Saviour on the mount, when he fulfilled the Law, by rescuing it from false expositions, and by restoring it to its primitive and spiritual signification; a duty which no teacher but Christ taught in perfection; and which none but disciples of Christ are able to practice. “ Dearly be-
 “ loved, avenge not yourselves, but give
 “ place unto wrath: for vengeance is
 “ mine

“ mine, saith the Lord.---Therefore, if
 “ thine enemy hunger, feed him : if he
 “ thirst, give him drink. Be not over-
 “ come of evil, but overcome evil with
 “ good.”---The parallel place in the Gos-
 pel by St. Mathew runs thus :---“ But
 “ I say unto you, love your enemies, bless
 “ them that curse you, do good to them
 “ that hate you, and pray for them that
 “ despitefully use you, and persecute you.
 “ That ye may be the children of your
 “ Father, which is in heaven.”---Matt.
 5. 44.---It would be an affront to your
 understanding, Madam, to ask, to what
 condition of persons the foregoing sublime
 doctrine was addressed, either by our Sa-
 viour or his Apostle. I will take it for
 granted, therefore, that you are convinced,
 that the line of distinction which you have
 marked between the 11 first chapters of the
 Epistle to the Romans and the 12th, is more
 imaginary than real ; and that the Apostle’s
 mode of managing this subject, is not left
 open to the disadvantageous conclusion
 which

which, according to your idea, the Christian professor, or the mere moralist may draw from it.

But it generally happens, that error begets error : and thus it appears to be in the present case. The idea of this marked distinction between the two several parts of the Epistle in question, having been adopted, it necessarily followed, that the language of the Apostle must accord with it. Hence it is, that the conclusion drawn from the premises in the opening of the twelfth chapter, has been accommodated to the idea prevailing in your mind, rather than to that which, as I conceive, actually prevailed in the mind of the Apostle on this occasion. “ I beseech you, therefore, “ brethren, (says the Apostle) by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies “ a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto “ God, which is your reasonable service.” Rom. xii. 1. The plain paraphrase annexed to which verse may be this :—Therefore my brethren, considering the great
mercy

mercy of God, by which salvation through faith in Christ has been provided for fallen man; the important subject which in the former part of this Epistle has been fully laid before you; let me beseech you to act worthy of your Christian calling, that this mercy may not be bestowed upon you in vain; but that by presenting your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which as reasonable men you ought to do, ye may thereby become meet to be partakers with the Saints in light.—On the ground of this argument, which represents the mercy of God in Christ as a reasonable consideration for human exertion in the work of salvation, the Apostle proceeds to the particular detail of those graces and duties necessary to fill up the Christian character; that his disciples might be informed with respect to all those requisites, by which, to make use of the Apostle's words on another occasion, “the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.”—2 Tim. iii. 17.—The argument of the

Apostle, taken in this light, appears to me to have that force in it, which cannot fail to leave its impression on every thinking mind; at the same time that it preserves a consistency with the manner of reasoning, before made use of in the sixth chapter of this same Epistle; by placing before his disciples a consideration, by which their conduct, as reasonable men, ought to be directed. The mercy of God in Christ furnished the most powerful reason to the Christian professor for the diligent discharge of those duties, which were to secure to him the benefit of it. Whereas the language of the Apostle on this occasion, according to your paraphrase on it, appears to me to be so far from furnishing any reason for human exertion, that it rather leads to the contrary conclusion. For, upon the supposition that the duties of Christianity grow out of the doctrines of it, “as the *natural* and *necessary* productions of such a living root,” page 292, or as you express yourself in the following page, that the

“ the duties of this twelfth chapter (now
 “ before us) grow out of the doctrines of
 “ the antecedent eleven, just as any other
 “ consequence grows out of its cause,”---
 the Apostle’s address to his disciples in
 the opening of the twelfth chapter, con-
 sidered in the light of argument, was per-
 fectly useless. The Apostle, you say,
 “ as if he suspected that the *indivisible*
 “ union between the doctrines and duties
 “ of Christianity might possibly be over-
 “ looked, links the two distinct divisions
 “ together by a logical *therefore*,” with
 which the twelfth chapter begins : “ I be-
 “ seech you *therefore*, (that is, as the *effect*
 “ of all I have been inculcating) that you
 “ present your bodies a living sacrifice,
 “ acceptable to God.”&c.---And then goes
 on to enforce on them, as a *consequence* of
 what he had been preaching, “ the prac-
 “ tice of every Christian virtue.” But
 Madam, if the Apostle knew that the
 Union between the doctrines and duties of
 Christianity was *indivisible*, and that his
 disciples

disciples' presenting their bodies a living sacrifice to God, was the effect of all he had been inculcating; the *necessary* production of that living root he had been planting; his proceeding to enforce on his disciples the practice of every Christian virtue, was only a waste of time and words; for in such case the effect must have followed its cause. Whereas the circumstance of the Apostle's having subjoined a *practical* lesson to his *doctrinal* one, proves, in my judgment, that he did not consider the one as *necessarily* growing out of the other. In fact he knew, that although Christian doctrine constituted the only foundation for Christian practice; he knew at the same time, that they were not so *inseparably* connected, that the latter was a *necessary* consequence of the former: otherwise, after having laid before his disciples the particulars of the Christian doctrine, he would not, it is presumed, have thus concluded his important lesson:---

“ I beseech you, *therefore*, brethren, by
 “ the

“ the mercies of God, that ye present your
 “ bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable
 “ unto God, which is your reasonable ser-
 “ vice.”---Rom. xii. 1. Or as he has still
 more strongly concluded, though to the
 same purpose, in his second Epistle to the
 Corinthians, chap. 7. where the same
 logical *therefore* is introduced. “ Having
 “ *therefore* these promises, dearly beloved,
 “ let us cleanse ourselves from all filthi-
 “ ness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holi-
 “ ness in the fear of God.” The logical
therefore, as I understand the Apostle, has
 peculiar force; as you understand him, it
 appears to me to have little or no force at
 all. For, according to my interpretation,
 it refers to a powerful motive for human
 exertion in the work of Salvation; accord-
 ing to your’s it refers to a consideration,
 which renders human exertion needless.
 In my sense, which is here submitted to
 your judgment, the Apostle makes the
 mercy of God, and the promises of God in
 Christ, the ground of an argument to per-
 suade

suade his Disciples to Christian practice, as the means of securing an interest in that mercy and those promises; on the consideration that their labour would not be vain in the Lord; because he was faithful who had promised. In your sense, if I understand it, the Christian professor is exhorted to secure the same interest, by a consideration which leads him to conclude, that the interest is ready secured to his hands; being given to understand, that where the doctrines of Christianity are professed, the duties of Christianity must *necessarily* be found, as a natural effect proceeding from its cause.

If then, I have rightly interpreted the Apostle's language, and not misunderstood yours; the distinction which you have found out between the eleven first chapters and the twelfth chapter of the Epistle under consideration, must be founded in error. Consequently the Apostle, so far from suspecting on this occasion, as you imagine, " that the *indivisible* union between the

" doctrines

“doctrines and duties of Christianity
 “might possibly be overlooked,” had no
 idea that any such union really existed :
 The object of his address to his disciples
 was, as I conceive, to prevent them from
 separating what, according to the divine
 œconomy of man’s salvation, it was in-
 tended, should always be joined together :
 and thus, by having the Grace of God
 bestowed on them in vain, rendering the
 mercies and promises of the Gospel of none
 effect.

Had you then, Madam, interpreted the
 Apostle thus ; “ I beseech you therefore,
 “ Brethren, (not as the *effect*, and *neces-*
 “ *sary* consequence of all I have been incul-
 “ cating ; but as what ought to be the
 “ effect and consequence of the doctrine
 “ I have taught, if you would act as rea-
 “ sonable men)” that ye present your
 bodies a living sacrifice, &c. you would,
 in my judgment, have given a sense more
 consistent with the general tenor of the
 Apostle’s argument on this occasion, as
 D well

well as more calculated to secure the object you have in view.

That the language of the Apostle should be thus understood, I appeal to his directions to Titus: where, after having first introduced the important doctrine of Christianity, founded in the kindness and love of God our Saviour, “who, according to his mercy, hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” he proceeds to point out the end and design of this gracious dispensation: “That being justified by grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Tit. iii. 7. That having been taken out of our fallen state of nature, and placed in a state of grace by baptism, we might become possessors of that heavenly inheritance, to which we now look forward in hope. But to this end, it must be well remembered, continues the Apostle, “for this is a faithful saying,” and worthy of all men to be received, and “these things I will

“ I will that thou affirm constantly,” as a matter of most essential importance, “ that they which have believed in God,” and, in consequence of that belief, been admitted into a state of salvation by baptism, and thereby become disciples of Christ, “ may be careful to maintain good works;” as necessary to render their admission into that state, of final advantage to them; otherwise “ your preaching will be vain, and their faith vain also.”

Admitting the foregoing paraphrase to be a fair one, the direction given to Titus, for the discharge of his Ministry, corresponds with that argument addressed by the Apostle to his disciples at Rome now under consideration; and the reader is given to understand by it, that the maintenance of good works ought to be a principal object of care and attention, on the part of those who profess the Christian Doctrine; and therefore was not, in St. Paul’s judgment, the *necessary* consequence of that doctrine. Indeed, upon the supposi-

tion that it was, I do not see with what propriety an address is made to those, who, you say, “content themselves with a “decent profession of the doctrines, instead “of a diligent discharge of the duties of “Christianity.” For such an address implies that there may be a separation between the doctrines and duties of Christianity; between belief and practice; a separation against which, as the destruction of the Christian cause, you so powerfully and so frequently argue; but against which, at the same time, your paraphrase on that part of St. Paul’s writings now more immediately before us, expressly militates.

But, Madam, understanding, as I trust I do, the general doctrine you wish to inculcate, namely, that—whilst religious practice constitutes no substitute, for the merits of Christ;—faith, it must be remembered at the same time, can be no substitute for the performance of Christian Duties; it is not my object so much to point out any
occasional

occasional inconsistency of language, as to submit to your consideration that mode of interpreting St. Paul, which I conceive has been inadvertently adopted on this occasion; because, in consequence of the conclusion which may be drawn from it by some persons, it appears unfavourable to the success of that cause for which you are so able an advocate.

St. Paul's argument in favour of Christian practice, which with reasonable men must have force, you have exchanged for an imaginary idea; which, upon the supposition that it had real existence, would want strength for the work in which it has been employed.

When the vital spirit of Christianity, which it is your professed object to promote, and from your zeal in which glorious cause you have been so long and so justly entitled to respectful consideration,—is attempted to be enforced at the expense of any part of its doctrine; the ground which may appear to be thereby gained in the Christian

tian World, will be more imaginary than real; and, in such case, a repetition of former experience will only serve to teach us, that the duties of Christianity will at no time be so completely practised, as when the doctrines of it are completely taught.

At the same time, I am aware that your interpretation of St. Paul will not fail to meet with respectable support. But that support, which does not make the Apostle speak a consistent language, will not I trust, Madam, by you be accepted.

A writer,* to whom the Christian cause stands considerably indebted, has described
 “Faith as the first radical grace of the
 “Holy Spirit, which takes place in the
 “heart of a sinner; and which brings
 “with it pardon, reconciliation, and
 “repentance; and never can exist with-
 “out producing the radical fruits of
 “Holiness;” which is to say, in your words, that there is an indivisible union between the Doctrines and Duties of

* Mr. Wilberforce.

Christianity;

Christianity ; or that the latter grow out of former, as the natural and necessary productions of such a living root. But, Madam, this is not the language either of the Scripture, or of the Church of England ; whose doctrine is taken from it. Nor does the favourite allusion to the fruit as the *necessary* production of a living root ; (an allusion no where to be met with in Scripture ;) by any means justify the conclusion attempted to be drawn from it. In fact, every allusion in Scripture, that bears similitude to it, is made use of to convey the very opposite idea. The allusion to the good tree bearing good fruit, and to the evil tree bearing corrupt fruit, though in conformity to the regular course of nature, does not apply in this case. But the allusions made to the tree which was ordered to be cut down, not because it was actually dead, but because it bore no fruit ; and to the tree which was permitted to stand one year longer, after having lived three years in an unprofitable state,

for the exprefs purpose of trying what effect additional cultivation might produce on it; are certainly in direct contradiction to your position; and give us to understand that Faith, which you compare to a *living root*, may *live* without being *productive*. In this light St. James represents it, in his attempt to counteract the *abuse* which had been made by those who had misunderstood St. Paul's Doctrine. He allows that there may be faith without practice; in like manner as there may be a *living root* without *fruit*; or the subject would admit of no dispute. But when faith is unaccompanied with works, then it is the unprofitable tree which contradicts the œconomy of the God of nature; and is therefore sentenced to be cut down; not because it has no life, but because it is as good as dead; the purpose for which it lives, being unanswered.

The Church of England teaches the same doctrine. She no where, that I know of, describes Faith, abstractedly
taken

taken, as “ never existing without
 “ producing the evangelical fruits of
 “ Holiness;” nor does she any where
 represent the Duties of Christianity as the
necessary production of its Doctrines. In
 our Liturgy; Repentance, Faith, and
 Obedience, are represented as distinct
 things; and consequently not so necessa-
 rily connected, that one may not in some
 degree exist without the other. In our
 Church Catechism, Repentance and Faith
 are separately described; the one implying
 the forsaking of sin, the other the stedfast
 belief of the promises of God made in the
 Sacrament of Baptism. But to these pre-
 liminaries of Man’s Salvation, if they may
 be so called, must be also added the fruits
 of obedience to the Holy Will and Com-
 mandments of God; which Christians are
 expected to bring forth by the assistance
 of the Holy Spirit, in the proper use of
 the means of Grace appointed for that
 purpose.

The

The other allusion made use of on this occasion, by which you describe the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity as *cause* and *effect*, does not appear to me to be less liable to exception; and for the same reason; because it may lead some persons to a false conclusion.

Cause and *effect*, in the regular course of inanimate nature, may be considered as correlative terms; being connected by that inseparable bond of union, which has been established by the God of Nature. But as the subjects of Government in the physical and moral world are of a very different kind; the former being simply material creatures, the latter moral agents; the cause in the one case producing its effect, by a certain regular appointed process, whilst in the other it is left to depend in a degree upon the intermediate agency of reasonable beings; a strict correspondence between them is not therefore to be expected. Christian Doctrine and Christian Duty answer to the allusion of cause
and

and effect, as often as the effect is produced. But they can be considered as correlative terms, in strict correspondence with the allusion here adopted, in this sense only; because they *ought* never to be separated. But to say Christian Doctrine and Christian Duty *ought* not to be separated, because perfect Christianity depends upon their constant connection; and to say, that the union between them is *indivisible*; is to make use of language, that certainly conveys two very different meanings.

From the very decided language to be met with in some parts of your Book, I am fully persuaded, that, on the doctrine of Faith and Works, there can be no real difference of opinion between us;—a circumstance which leads me to wish that we were as perfectly agreed in our expressions relative to it. For I am inclined to think, that errors on this subject, have been derived more from want of precision in language, than from want of correctness in ideas.

ideas. On the great distinguishing doctrine of the Gospel, Justification by Faith, “that corner stone of the whole system of Redemption,” there can be but one opinion among Christians, properly so called. As a corollary of that important doctrine, it follows, that by works, considered as the *meritorious* cause of salvation, no man can be justified. Thus far, then, we are perfectly agreed, We are not less agreed in the position you have so decidedly laid down, that a decent profession of the doctrines of Christianity, unaccompanied with the duties of it, will be unavailable to salvation; because, to make use of your own words, “though salvation be the gift of “God, it must be worked out” by man. In what then do we differ? We differ, Madam, in this.—According to the idea conveyed in that part of your Book now immediately before me, the Reader is given to understand, that Faith, considered as the *cause* of Evangelical righteousness, (which I admit,) must *necessarily* be productive of the fruits
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of it, as its correspondent effect ; which, as a Christian Minister, I am called on to deny, for the following, what appear to me to be, substantial reasons.—The position, that faith must *necessarily* produce good works, leaves no middle character between the downright infidel and the perfect Christian : consequently, all the reasoning, either of St. Paul, St. James, or yourself, that is addressed to formal professors, remains without the possibility of application. On the other hand, this position, exclusive of its directly militating against fact and experience, leads moreover to a very possible and very dangerous conclusion ; that of lulling the formal professor of Christianity into a fatal security on a subject of the first importance ; by teaching him to take that for granted which remains to be proved ; and indolently to expect a consequence, which, according to the œconomy of Divine Grace, he is himself to become the instrument of promoting.

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The connection between Christian practice and the motives to it is certainly *in one sense* inseparable. Nevertheless, the distinction between Christian doctrines considered as the necessary ground-work for Christian duties; because Christian practice can stand upon no other foundation; and between Christian duties, considered as the necessary consequence of Christian doctrine; appears to me to be a distinction of the simplest kind: and whenever, for want of such a distinction having been clearly made, the Christian is encouraged to live in an indolent profession of Christianity; the gross doctrine of Faith without works, and the more plausible one of Faith, considered as *necessarily* productive of them, will be found to differ only in the direct and indirect promotion of the same fatal effects.

Your candour, Madam, will, I trust, secure me from the imputation of being unnecessarily scrupulous on this subject.— For it would be no credit either to my profession, or understanding, to possess a wish
to

to find fault, without having a reason that justified me to myself in so doing. The reason in the present case, has been furnished, by the decisive approbation that has accompanied your work; on the consideration, that in proportion to the excellence of a publication, will be the effect of any error that may be contained in it. The error in question, which appears to be the offspring of the imagination, rather than of the judgment; (for it certainly does not correspond with other parts of your writings,) is, with respect, submitted to your examination; because it relates to a subject in itself the most important, and, at the same time, a subject, which, of all others, has been most liable to be misunderstood. It may be said, and with truth, that the general tenor of your publication is calculated to counteract an erroneous conclusion that may be drawn from one particular part of it; and, that the decisive language contained in your 19th chap. p. 276, 277, in favour of Christian practice, considered as
 what

what ought to be the constant object of Christian endeavour, precludes all apprehension of danger from the contrary conclusion. For this very reason, Madam, it were to be wished, that no such part was to be found, from which it was possible that a contrary conclusion could be drawn; because, there are some readers who will pay more attention to one single passage that appears to favour their own preconceived opinions, whatever they may be, than to all the other passages in a book put together. And hence, it sometimes happens, that a little apparent evil, produces a more effectual and permanent operation, than a much greater portion of what is really good.

The inseparable union that ought to subsist between the doctrines and duties of Christianity, which constitutes the great hinge upon which the perfection of the Gospel dispensation turns, renders of moment every expression, that tends to lead the reader to any decisive conclusion on such a subject. In no case, is precision of language

language more essential than in this. The false judgments that have been repeatedly formed to the disgrace and ruin of the Christian cause, ought, by this time, if the world grew wise by experience, to have brought all Christians to an uniformity both in sentiment and expression on the subject before us. But when the error on either side of this important subject grew so rampant as to become necessary to be counteracted, it might, perhaps, be difficult for those who entered with zeal on the task, to draw the line of distinction between the conclusion they wished to enforce, and that they meant to oppose, so exact as to preclude all possibility of future dispute. Hence, much more, perhaps, has been written upon this controverted subject, than the proper elucidation of it absolutely required.—Considered simply in itself, unconnected with that controversy which has unhappily been attached to it, the subject appears to me to lay in a small compass. When pious and learned

writers enter on the discussion of it, the difference between them consists more in a difference of expression, than in a disagreement of ideas. It is to be reasonably hoped, therefore, that where pride of argument and all spirit of opposition to a supposed adversary is laid aside, which ought to be the case with good Christians; and the only object in view is to speak as the Oracles of God; discordant expressions will amicably give way, to what, under such circumstances, will be readily acknowledged to be the general sense of Scripture.

The Gospel is addressed to man as a moral and accountable being. He is called on to work out his salvation, because God worketh in him both to will and to do. In what manner, and to what degree, Divine Grace and human endeavour co-operate in the great work of Salvation; the Scripture has no where informed him. What man, therefore, does not know, it would be folly in him to attempt to explain. At the same time, it
must

must be remembered, that whatever doctrine tends in any way to militate against a position so clearly revealed, cannot be a genuine doctrine of Scripture. It is no compliment Madam, to say, that the object you have before you is to promote the genuine spirit of Christianity, which certainly cannot exist, independent of its practical effects; because the general tenor of your writing furnishes incontrovertible proof on that head. Admitting, however, that your ideas on the subject of Christianity are as correct as your object is laudable; I must yet think that the language, which it is the design of this letter to point out to your reconsideration, is liable to exception; because it may tend, abstractedly taken, to lead some Christians to look for effects, at the same time that they live negligent of the means designed to produce them. Faith in Christ will certainly be productive of the fruits of Christianity, when the professor has not been wanting to himself in the diligent and

faithful use of the means that have been instituted for that purpose. But it is no uncommon thing for ignorant Christians to expect the fruits of Divine Grace, without making use of the means of it; and this is downright enthusiasm. When such persons who have been accustomed to talk of their waiting God's time, in the expectation that more is to be done for them in the work of Salvation than the tenor of the Christian Covenant authorizes them to expect, are told; that the duties of Christianity are the *natural* and *necessary* production of its Doctrines; such information must tend to confirm their prejudice, and, in conformity with it, lead them to hope that those fruits of faith will in due time be produced in them, which they, as moral agents, ought to have been instrumental in producing in themselves; in correspondence with that most erroneous idea, that the good work of faith which the Grace of God had began in them, would not be left uncompleted. This indolent kind
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of Christianity, against which no one has written more decidedly than yourself; a Christianity so very different from the idea St. Paul has taught us to form of it, when he describes himself as reaching unto those things which are before, and pressing forward for the prize of his high calling in Jesus Christ, if by any means he might attain unto the Resurrection from the dead, Phil. 3. 11. &c. is now, I fear, creeping in among the lower orders; and gradually drawing them away from a Church, in which no such Doctrine is taught. To counteract this growing corruption, so far at least as the small circle of my ministerial labour extends, the following discourse was written:—It has no claim to attention in any other sense, than that of its containing a fair exposition of those particular portions of Holy Writ, which immediately relate to the subject in hand. The object before me was to enable the plain Christian Disciple to form a correct, and at the same time unperplexed judgment

for himself, on the much controverted subject of faith and works. For this purpose the example of Abraham was appealed to, as the acknowledged standard of perfection. An inquiry therefore into the particular circumstances of his case became necessary. To do this, I had only to leave Scripture to speak for itself; on the conviction that, when one part of the divine word was compared with another, the conclusion would so grow out of the premises, as readily to present itself to the understanding of every attentive hearer. And Madam, to make use of the language of a learned Professor,*

“ whenever I undertake the interpretation
 “ of Scripture, I should abhor myself, if
 “ I suffered any other principle to prevail
 “ with me, than that of giving utterance
 “ to the pure and simple perceptions of
 “ truth.”

* Rev. Dr. Blayney.

In making the foregoing remarks, Madam, I have in my own judgment, discharged a duty. At the same time, when I consider that your late publication has received a public testimony of approbation from one of the most distinguished prelates of our Church; it is not without a mixture of diffidence and respect due to so high an authority, that I venture to submit them to your consideration. Conscious, however, of the integrity of my intention, it is not so much my wish, that *my* interpretation of St. Paul be the true one, as that such interpretation may be established, which, in the judgment of pious and learned Christians, will do most justice to the Apostle's argument. As a fallible man, I shall readily acknowledge obligation to the person, who shall convince me that I have been in error: being desirous of taking a leaf out of any book, whose object it is, by the propagation of

Scripture Doctrine, to promote, what every Minister of Christ ought to have at heart, the grand design of the Gospel Dispensation,

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

With respect,

Your obedient Servant,

CHARLES DAUBENY.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM
A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIAN IMITATION
IN
A DISCOURSE
ON
GENESIS XV. 6.

*And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to
him for righteousness.*

THE Faith of Abraham constitutes a standard, by which the truth and reality of Christian faith may be ascertained. On this account, it was appealed to both by St. Paul and St. James, in support of the conclusion which they drew from their different views of the same important subject. These two Apostles, being furnished with the assistance of that Holy Spirit, whose declared office it was to lead them into all truth, must have known in what the nature and excellency of Abraham's faith consisted. They could not consequently differ from each other,

other, in their motive for recommending it as a pattern for Christian imitation. On a due consideration of their writings, it will therefore be found, that whilst their manner of handling their subject differed, according to the different view in which they placed it ; and the language made use of by each was suited to the particular error which it was designed to correct ; still the conclusion which these Apostles intended shou'd be drawn by their respective disciples in favour of Christian practice, was precisely the same. St. Paul first introduces the subject of Abraham's faith, in the fourth Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. His object in view in introducing it was, to convince the Romans, in his character of Apostle to the Gentiles, that acceptance with God was not confined to those who had been observers of the Mosaical Law, but that salvation through Christ was offered to the Gentile as well as the Jew ; in short to persons of all nations, who walked in the steps of faithful

faithful Abraham. "Therefore, we conclude, (says the Apostle) that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." Rom. iii.

28.

St. Paul, it is to be observed, was at this time writing to his Gentile converts. The first thing he had to do, therefore, was to convince them, that they, as *Gentiles*, had an interest in the doctrine of salvation, which he was commissioned to preach. Aware, at the same time, of the objection that would be made by his countrymen to that equalizing plan, which placed the Gentile convert upon the same footing with the believing Jew; that he should be accused of making void the Law, and thereby taking away all the advantage to be expected from its observance; St. Paul takes care to obviate it, by bringing the Jew and Gentile together in the unity of the same faith, to the acceptance of the same common salvation,

vation, "through the righteousness of God,
 " which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all,
 " and upon all them that believe." " For,
 " (as the Apostle has elsewhere expressed
 " it, in allusion to the universality of the
 " Christian Church), we are all baptized
 " into one body, whether we be Jews or
 " Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."

1 Cor. xii. 13.

" What shall we say then, that Abra-
 " ham our Father, as pertaining to the
 " flesh, hath found?" If Jew and Gen-
 " tile are put on the same footing by the
 " Gospel (which is maintained to be the case),
 " you will ask me, says St. Paul, " what ad-
 " vantage then hath the Jew? or what
 " profit is there of circumcision?" And
 " particularly so in the case of Father Abra-
 " ham.

" To this I answer, (continues the Apost-
 " le) if Abraham were justified by works,
 " he hath whereof to glory; but not be-
 " fore God. For what saith the Scripture—
 " Abraham believed in God, and it was
 " counted

"counted unto him for righteousness."

Rom. iv. 2, 3.

Abraham, then, was justified before God by his faith. It remains, therefore, to be ascertained, when this important circumstance of Abraham's justification took place: for the whole force of St. Paul's reasoning, on this occasion, turns on this point.—Had Abraham been circumcised *before* he was justified, there would have been some ground for the confirmation of the Jewish prejudice respecting *circumcision*, considered as the meritorious cause of Abraham's acceptance with God. But this prejudice, which existed in consequence of the Jews having at this time lost sight of the spiritual meaning of their Law; was the very prejudice against which St. Paul was contending. In order, therefore, effectually to set it aside, the Apostle inquires into the grounds of it, with the view of establishing the nature of that connection with the Patriarch, which was the only one which would prove of real advantage to his descendants.

scendants. “Now to him that worketh,
 “ (says the Apostle) is the reward reckoned,
 “ not of grace, but of debt. But to him
 “ that worketh not, but believeth in him
 “ that justifieth the ungodly, (which was
 “ the case with Abraham, to whom the
 “ appeal was here made) his faith is
 “ accounted for righteousness.” Rom.
 iv. 4, 5.

Having thus briefly ascertained the nature of Abraham's justification; that it was a justification through faith in the Divine promises; the Apostle proceeds to determine the important point he had in view, for the purpose of uniting the Jew and Gentile in the same common profession. “Cometh this blessedness, then, or this justification upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?” Rom. iv. 9. In other words, are the Jews only to derive benefit from it; or are the Gentiles also? For the resolution of this question, appeal is made to the case of Father Abraham.—“We say (continues
 “ the

“ the Apostle) that faith was reckoned to
 “ Abraham for righteousness. How was it
 “ then reckoned? when he was in circum-
 “ cision or in uncircumcision?” Rom. iv. 10.
 The answer immediately follows, “ not when
 “ when he was in circumcision, but in un-
 “ circumcision.” *Circumcision* then could
 have nothing to do with a justification,
 which had taken place *before* that legal
 ceremony had been actually performed.
 Consequently, every pretension that the
 Jews made to a particular interest in their
 connection with Abraham, on the ground
 of *circumcision*, was built upon a false founda-
 tion. “ For, (as the Apostle proceeds
 “ to argue) Abraham received the sign
 “ of circumcision, as a seal of the righte-
 “ ousness of the faith which he had, being
 “ yet *uncircumcised*.” Rom. iv. 11.—
 Circumcision, therefore, in the case of
 Abraham, was to be considered as a seal
 bearing testimony to a deed, that had pre-
 viously taken place. Now, in all acts of
 bearing testimony, the virtue is not in the
 seal,

seal, but in the deed to which it is affixed.
 The seal, in this case, was circumcision;
 the deed was that act of faith, by which
 Abraham had been previously justified.—
 And the reason why Abraham's justification
 actually took place before the seal of cir-
 cumcision was affixed to it by way of tes-
 timony, was, as the Apostle proceeds to
 inform us; "that Abraham might be the
 " Father of all them that believe, though
 " they be *not circumcised*; that righteous-
 " ness might be imputed unto them
 also." Rom. iv. 11. The substance then
 of the Apostle's argument, on this occa-
 sion, is this.—Abraham was justified before
 God by his faith, "yet being uncircum-
 " cised," that is, when he was in his Gen-
 tile condition, before he was taken into
 that particular covenant, of which circum-
 cision was the appointed seal or token. The
 conclusion to be drawn from which pre-
 mises by the Gentiles, to whom St. Paul
 was now writing, was, therefore this, that
 considering themselves standing in the same
 predicament,

predicament, in which Abraham stood at the time he was justified, they might consequently be justified in the same way that he was; namely, by faith, without circumcision, and the works of the ceremonial law. And that the argument might be doubly conclusive, as respecting the case of the Jew as well as the Gentile; the Apostle proceeds to observe, that the reason why Abraham was circumcised was, “that he might be the father of the “circumcision also;” that is, a father to them “who are not of the circumcision “only, but also walk in the steps of that “faith of our Father Abraham, which he “had, being yet uncircumcised.”—Rom. iv. 12.—As the want of circumcision, therefore, threw no stumbling block in the way of the Gentiles, to prevent their attaining to justification on the one hand; so was the performance of that ceremony of no advantage, in this respect, to the Jew on the other: the only justification available to either party, being to

be derived from a faith, similar to that which Abraham had, when in his Gentile condition. “ For, (as the Apostle proceeds) the promise made to Abraham, that he should be the heir of the world; *i. e.* of those blessings which should be derived from him through his seed, to all the nations upon the earth, Gen. xxii. 18.—was not made to Abraham or his seed through the law; but through, or by virtue of, the righteousness of faith.”

—Rom. iv. 13. Thus, St. Paul, in another part of his writings, in correspondence with the argument made use of on this occasion, after an appeal made to Abraham’s faith, concludes thus:—

“ Know ye not, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, (in consequence of this gracious plan

“ plan of salvation *through faith* to all
 “ nations, thus communicated to Abra-
 “ ham) they which be of *faith*, whether
 “ Jews or Gentiles, are blessed with faith-
 “ ful Abraham.”—Gal. iii. 7. 8. 9.—
 “ For the promise (as St. Peter told the
 “ Jews, in the opening of his commission
 “ at the day of Pentecost) was not only to
 “ them and their children; but to those
 “ also that were afar off; meaning all
 “ nations upon earth, even as many as the
 “ Lord shall call.”—Acts ii. 39. From
 whence it follows, according to the idea
 intended to be conveyed by the Apostle to
 his Gentile converts on this occasion; that
 the justification available to salvation, was
 not to be derived from that peculiar mark
 of the covenant, or those legal conse-
 quences of it, by which the Jews were
 distinguished from all other nations; but
 from something which Jew and Gentile
 might possess in common with each other;
 namely, from a righteousness similar to that
 which Abraham had, “ yet being uncir-

“circumcised.”—Even “the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them *that believe*: for there is no difference.”—Rom. iii. 22.

If now we turn to the history of events respecting Abraham, as they are recorded in the book of Genesis, we shall find them in strict correspondence with the Apostles mode of arguing on this occasion. The first particular notice, that is taken of Abraham, occurs in the twelfth Chapter; where, at the age of seventy-five, the Patriarch is described, as leaving his country, his kindred, and his father's house, in obedience to the Lord's command; and travelling into a strange land, which the Lord was to shew him. In consequence of this faithful and ready obedience, which constituted the distinguishing excellence of the Patriarch's character, and by way of reward and encouragement for his persevering conduct, and firm reliance on God's word, a revelation is made to him in the thirteenth chapter, respecting the land he
was

was to inhabit ; and the numerous family of which he was to be the blessed origin. In the fourteenth chapter, a blessing from the most High God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth, is pronounced on Abraham, by Melchisedech King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God. In the succeeding chapter, that from which our text is taken, as Abraham still advanced in years, and consequently the hope of the accomplishment of the divine promise respecting a family, might be considered, humanly speaking, to be decreasing upon him ; we have an account of a more particular Revelation vouchsafed to him on that interesting subject.—“ Fear not,
 “ Abraham (said God to him in a vision);
 “ I am thy shield, and thy exceeding
 “ great reward. And Abraham said,
 “ Lord God, what wilt thou give me;
 “ seeing I go childless, and lo, one born
 “ in my house, is mine heir! And behold
 “ the word of the Lord came unto him,
 “ saying, this shall not be thine heir;

“ but he that shall come forth out of
 “ thine own bowels shall be thine heir.
 “ And he brought him forth abroad and
 “ said, look now toward Heaven and tell
 “ the stars, if thou be able to number
 “ them. And he said unto him, so shall
 “ thy seed be.—And he believed in the
 “ Lord, and he counted it unto him for
 “ righteousness.” Gen. xv. 4. 5. 6.—Abra-
 ham was at this time, it is presumed, some-
 what above four score years of age; for in
 the immediately succeeding chapter, which
 records the birth of Ishmael, we read that
 “ Abraham was four score and six
 “ years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to
 “ Abraham.” Gen. xvi. 16.—In the
 seventeenth chapter, on which we next enter,
 we have a particular account of the esta-
 blishment of the Covenant between God
 and Abraham; of which circumcision was
 the appointed sign or token. Now, towards
 the conclusion of this chapter, we read, that
 Abraham performed the appointed cere-
 mony of circumcision in the self-same day
 that

that God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years and nine, and Ishmael thirteen years old, when this ceremony took place. Gen. xvii. 24.—Circumcision, consequently, on which the carnal Jew built so much in St. Paul's day, did not actually take place till twenty-four years after Abraham had, by his faithful obedience, ensured to himself favour and acceptance with God; and probably, till near twenty years after he had given that additional proof of his firm reliance on the divine word, which, in the language of the text, "was counted to him for righteousness."

Having thus followed the chain of the Apostle's argument on this occasion, and compared it with that history of events, by which it was drawn out, for the purpose of its being applied to the then existing case of the Jew and Gentile; it will be proper, with a view to Christian improvement, to proceed one step further; in order to ascertain the particular quality of

that faith, which gave to Abraham the distinctive title of "Father of the faithful;" and justified the Apostles in holding him forth as a pattern for Christian imitation.

The faith of Abraham, so highly spoken of in Scripture, was not a speculative, but a practical faith. It consisted not, in merely believing the promises of God; but, in conformity with that belief, it began and ended with obedience of the most exemplary and trying kind. Previous to his belief of the promise recorded in the text, Abraham had given the most striking proof of his implicit obedience to the divine command, by quitting his country, his kindred, and family, in search of an unknown land. His belief, therefore, of the divine promises, respecting the fruitfulness of his seed, "was counted to him for righteousness;" because, from the specimen of obedience that Abraham had already exhibited, God knew, that it proceeded from the heart of one, who
was

was at all times ready to make the divine word the rule of his conduct. After the promise which Abraham had received, that “ in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed,” began to be accomplished in the birth of his son Isaac; he was called to give a still more trying proof of his faithful obedience, by sacrificing the only hope upon which the completion of the promise was apparently built. He was called upon to take his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and offer him up for a burnt offering to the Lord. Abraham instantly obeyed without a murmur. “ He rose up (as the historian informs us) *early* in the morning;” in token of his ready obedience to the divine command; and, after having travelled three days, with all the feelings of an anxious father working in his breast, faith gaining the victory over human nature, he greatly persisted in the resolution to slay his son.—An instance of practical faith, which if considered in all its circumstances,

stances, is certainly not to be paralleled. And it is with reference to its *practical quality*, that the faith of the Patriarch is particularly pointed out by the Apostle; who thus describes it: “ By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into
 “ a place which he should after receive for
 “ an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out,
 “ not knowing whither he went. And he
 “ sojourned in the land of Promise, as in a
 “ strange country. For he looked for a city
 “ which hath foundation, whose builder and
 “ maker is God.” Heb. xi. 8, 9, 10.---
 Such was the first effect of Abraham’s faith. It made him give up Earth for Heaven. For, as the Apostle proceeds, speaking of Abraham and his posterity;
 “ They that say such things, (namely,
 “ confessing that they were strangers and
 “ pilgrims upon earth,) declare plainly
 “ that they seek a country: And truly,
 “ if they had been mindful of that coun-
 “ try from whence they came out, they
 “ might have had opportunity to have
 “ returned,

“ returned. But now they desire a better
 “ country, that is, an heavenly. Where-
 “ fore, God is not ashamed to be called
 “ their God; for he hath prepared for
 “ them a city.” Heb. xi. 14.---The faith
 of Abraham, therefore, in this instance
 was a principle of obedience, founded on
 the expectation of a future state.

The remaining still more trying speci-
 men of Abraham's faith, the same Apostle
 has thus elegantly described. “ Who
 “ against hope (says he) believed in hope,
 “ that he might become the father of
 “ many nations: And being not weak
 “ in faith' He staggered not at the pro-
 “ mise of God, who quickeneth the dead,
 “ and calleth those things that be not as
 “ though they were; being fully per-
 “ suaded that what God had promised,
 “ he was able also to perform.”---Rom.
 iv. 17. &c.---“ He accounted (says the
 “ same Apostle in another part of his
 “ writings) that God was able to
 “ raise him up, even from the dead;
 “ from

“ from whence also he had received him
 “ in a figure.”---Heb. xi. 19. He *ac-*
counted; the word in the original (λογι-
 ζαμεν) signifies, he *reasoned* with him-
 self; and his reason told him, that there
 were no impossibilities with God; and
 that his promises were “ Yea and Amen ”
 to all them that believe. He was, there-
 fore, satisfied in his mind, that the power
 of God could as easily raise his Son again
 from the dead, as it had first caused him
 to be born from one, who according to
 the course of nature, was considered as
 dead.

A more striking proof of practical
 faith could not have been produced; any
 further trial of the principle, by which
 the conduct of Abraham was directed,
 became, therefore, unnecessary. The spe-
 cimen of faith held out to the imitation of
 future generations was most complete. It
 was, as St. James has described it, “ a faith
 “ made perfect by works.”---A principle
 of uniform and ready obedience to all the
 commands

commands of God, under the most trying circumstances. A faith, which having its eye steadily fixed upon God, enabled the Patriarch, in discharge of his obedience, to rise superior to every obstacle, which flesh and blood, and the concerns of this world could throw in his way. A faith, which secured to the honoured Patriarch the distinguishing title of the "*Friend of God*:" and for the following reason; "I know him, (said God) that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord.---Gen. xviii. 19.

From this account of the particular quality of Abraham's faith, certain conclusions remain to be drawn; which, in consequence of the mistakes that have at different times prevailed on this important subject, ought to be ever present to the Christian mind.

It is to be observed then in the first place, that when St. Paul told his disciples, they were to be justified by faith

without

without works, (language which has given rise to a fatal error that has at times been adopted by Christian Professors;) he meant the *ceremonial works of the Mosaic law*; not those *works of evangelical obedience* necessary to accompany the faith of the Christian; because St. James, in his appeal to the same example, for the confirmation of the doctrine he had to enforce, placed before his disciples those works of evangelical obedience, by which faithful Abraham was justified. I call them works of evangelical obedience, because the practice of Abraham was certainly built upon an evangelical foundation. “He rejoiced, “said Christ, to see my day; he saw “it, and was glad.”—With the eye of faith he looked forward to that promised seed, which was to spring from his loins; in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. And the hope of immortality, which accompanied such a prospect, gave uniform stability to his obedience. Abraham, then, was not justified

fied by the works of the law ; for he was justified, as St. Paul told his disciples, before he became obedient to it. As it has been above observed, he was *first* justified, and *afterwards* circumcised. Nevertheless Abraham, St. James expressly tells us, *was justified by works* ; James ii. 21. and two inspired Apostles could not contradict each other. It follows therefore, that Abraham was justified by those works of obedience to the divine commands, which accompanied his faith ; and by which that faith was made perfect unto salvation.—On this ground Abraham was appealed to by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, not as the father of the Jewish Nation, but as the general Father of the *faithful* ; whether Jew or Gentile : for the promises which the Jews considered as peculiarly belonging to themselves, by virtue of their connection with Abraham according to the flesh, were not made to Abraham in consequence of his circumcision, but of his being possessed of that
 signal

signal faith accompanied with exemplary obedience, which made the venerable Patriarch to be deservedly esteemed the father of all faithful men, in every age and nation of the world. The distinction, then, to be made on this occasion is, between these ceremonial works of the law, by which the Jew could not be justified; and these works of evangelical obedience, without which no Christian must expect to be justified. And the application to Christianity is briefly this, that they only who walk in the steps of Abraham's faith, a faith made perfect by works, as it is described by St. James, will be "blessed with faithful Abraham."—Gal. iii. 9. In other words, they only will be accepted of God, whose faith, like his, constitutes a principle of uniform and steady obedience to God's Commands.

The two great Apostles abovementioned could not, therefore, contradict each other, for the following obvious reason; because, when speaking of faith and works, they had

had respectively before them two very different views of the subject: the one speaking professedly of the works of the Jewish religion, the other of the works of the Christian. St. Paul asserts, that the faith of Abraham, without the works of the Jewish Law, was available to justification. The position of St. James is, that the faith of Abraham justified him, in consequence of its being accompanied with an obedience to the divine commands. In the first case, faith was complete without works; in the latter it was made perfect by works: the works alluded to in each case being of a different kind. The positions advanced were, therefore, equally undeniable. And the only difference, if it be necessary to point out any, between the great Apostles, was this; the one maintained that faith, or the belief of the Christian religion, was sufficient to salvation, without obedience to the Law of Moses; the other, that it was not, without obedience to the commands of Christ.

“ From hence we may infer, (accord-
 “ ing to the judicious remark of a cele-
 “ brated writer,) that when any two pas-
 “ sages of Scripture seem contrary one to
 “ another, whereof the one be controver-
 “ sial, and the other plain and moral; we
 “ must always endeavour to accommodate
 “ the controversial passage to the plain one,
 “ and not the plain one to the controver-
 “ sial. And the reason is evident; be-
 “ cause the plain moral passage cannot be
 “ mistaken, being interpreted according
 “ to the most obvious and literal sense:
 “ but the sense of the controversial pas-
 “ sage cannot be rightly understood, with-
 “ out understanding the particular contro-
 “ versy, about which it was written.”

In one sense, indeed, it must be said,
 that by works no man can be justified; whe-
 ther reference be made to the ceremonial
 works under the Law, or to the works of
 evangelical obedience under the Gospel;
 because, it is only in, and through Christ,
 that

that justification is to be obtained. The works of man, as a fallen creature, must, under every dispensation, be defective; and consequently not entitled, on their own account, to any reward. In this view of the subject, a man is not justified, properly speaking, either by his faith or his works; because neither faith nor works constitute the *meritorious* cause of his justification. All, therefore, that is meant, when it is said, that a man is justified by faith or by works, is this; that those works of Christian piety and moral virtue, which are the offspring of faith in the divine promises under the New Covenant, and the consequences of that communion between the believer's soul and the divine spirit, on which the whole of our spiritual life depends, are, by virtue of the principle from which they proceed, rendered pleasing and acceptable unto God; and will be considered as furnishing their performers with a title of grace to that *salvation*, which

has been purchased for them by the merits of a crucified Redeemer.

There is still another prevailing error upon this subject necessary to be guarded against. The doctrine of faith without works, considered as competent to salvation, has indeed been in a great degree put out of countenance: In fact, it is too grossly absurd, to stand the test of rational investigation. But in guarding against the extreme, into which Christians have been carried in their opposition to one erroneous doctrine, they have unguardedly been led into another, not less incompatible with the grand economy of man's redemption: that doctrine, I mean, which represents the fruits of obedience and holiness, as the *necessary* produce of Christian faith. This appears to be paying a compliment to faith at the expense of truth. For, according to this position, there can be no such thing as Christian profession, unaccompanied with Christian practice.

practice. Consequently, there can be no such Beings as hypocrites in the world. This mode of determining what *really is*, by what *ought to be*; though it originates from the laudable zeal of supporting the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, *justification by faith*, does not partake of that soundness of judgment, necessary to the advancement of the cause in which it is employed. To overrate the value of what is in itself highly estimable, like pushing a sound argument beyond its proper degree of proof, tends often to defeat the purpose which we have in view to establish. Taking, for instance, this position respecting the necessary connection between faith and works for granted, the Christian professor, instead of giving all diligence to make his calling and election sure, by following the advice of the Apostle, and seeking through the use of the appointed means, to add to his faith those graces and virtues, which are its proper, and in one sense, necessary accompaniments,

ments; is at times tempted to sit down in the expectation, that the faith he professes will, in God's good time, produce every work in him requisite to the completion of his Christian character. Whereas every day may be a day of salvation to the Christian, who is not wanting to himself. And whilst the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human soul, as essential to the Christian life, is fully and unequivocally acknowledged; it should at the same time be remembered that, where this effect does not take place, it is not so much because the assistance of divine grace is withheld; as because the means of procuring it, have been neglected or abused.

To give an air of plausibility, however, to the doctrine under consideration, recourse is had to an allusion. Faith is called the *root* of the tree, of which, obedience is the fruit: and, in pursuance of this allusion, the duties of Christianity have been represented, as growing out of the

the

the doctrines of it; “as the *natural* and
“*necessary* production of such a living
“root.”

But it not unfrequently happens, that
whilst the imagination is amused with an
allusion, the judgment is imposed upon by
the reasoning attempted to be built upon
it. This appears to be the case, if I mis-
take not, in the allusion before us: which,
being no where to be found in Scripture,
may on that account with more freedom
be analyzed.

We know, that where there is *no living
root*, there cannot possibly be any fruit.
And as it is in the kingdom of nature, so
we are satisfied it is in the Kingdom of
Grace. Where there is no Christian
faith, there can be no Christian practice:
because Christian fruit can grow only on
the Christian tree. So far then, the allu-
sion may be said to hold:—But, we know
also, that where a living root does exist,
fruit is not always produced. Here then
the allusion certainly does not hold. The

fig tree, on which our Saviour sought fruit and found none, was *alive*; for the God of nature would not seek a produce contrary to that course of nature which he had established. It was, then, because the root was alive, without fruit on the branches, that the tree was condemned.

Similar to this may be the condition of Christian faith. It may in some sense be alive, at the same time that it is unproductive: Otherwise, profession and practice must be one and the same thing; and if so, all the exhortations to the latter as necessary to the perfection of the former, so frequent in scripture, are but so many vain words.

The conclusions to be drawn from these premises are important, and they are these:

—In the first place, that both *faith* and *works*, as constituting two essential conditions of the Gospel Covenant on man's part, should have each its proper weight allotted to it in the scale of Christian estimation. That, whilst no improper merit

merit be given to works on the one hand, faith on the other, be not so preached, as to tend to a neglect of those means; by which, according to the dispensation of Divine Grace, the works of the Christian Professor are to be produced.

The misfortune has been, that writers on this subject have, generally speaking, been more attentive to the particular error they had in view to counteract, than to the language of Scripture, by which alone it ought to have been counteracted. From hence, one extreme has oftentimes led into another. To avoid the extreme on either side, the exact line of interpretation in this case should be drawn from Scripture. In so doing, we shall find, that we are not less warranted in saying, that, if a man has faith, he will be saved, whatever be his practice; because faith constitutes the only foundation upon which the Christian building can stand; than we should be in maintaining, that, if a man hath faith, he therefore must have practice, because

because faith will *necessarily* produce it. In each case, a position is advanced, which scripture does not warrant, and which reason and experience join together to contradict.

The Christian Professor, therefore, who would not deceive himself, must judge of his faith by his practice. Should he find that it is not of that productive nature, of which, according to the tenor of the Gospel covenant, it ought to be; let him not rest satisfied with the fallacious idea, that faith will sooner or later produce its proper effects: for fruit, it is to be remembered, though the *natural*, is not the *necessary* produce of *every living root*. With this idea in his mind, let him simply examine whether there is fruit on the tree or not. Should none be found, let him instantly dig about it and dung it; that is, let him make all diligent and faithful use of the means of Grace, which have been furnished for the express purpose, that his faith may become productive of evangelical

lical fruit, before the tree is cut down. And in turning back his thoughts to the example set before him in the text, let him consider; that the first act of Abraham's faith that is recorded, was an act of signal obedience to the Divine Command.

At the same time, let him remember, that every sin, which the Christian Professor cherishes in his bosom, is that darling Isaac, the son of his love, which he is called upon to sacrifice to his God. And should his faith not furnish him with the resolution to do it; unpossessed of the faith of an Abraham, he must not expect to reap an Abraham's reward.

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